

Department of Planning and Budget 2016 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB528

House of Origin Introduced Substitute Engrossed
Second House In Committee Substitute Enrolled

2. Patron: Stuart

3. Committee: Finance

4. Title: Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program; eligibility.

5. Summary: Extends the benefits of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program to the spouse or child of a veteran with at least a 90 percent permanent, service-related disability. Under current law, the spouse or child would be eligible for benefits only if the veteran's disability was incurred during military operations against terrorism, on a peacekeeping mission, as a result of a terrorist act, or in any armed conflict. The bill also requires the Department of Veterans Services to define "armed conflict" pursuant to regulation. The provisions of the bill are contingent on funding in a 2016 general appropriation act.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes, Item 144.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary, see item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: This bill would expand the eligibility of the program to non-combat related disabilities. According to the Department of Veteran's Services, the number of applicants in 2015 to this program that did not qualify, due to non-combat related disabilities, were 502. The current award amount for this program is \$1,800 per year per student. If the program eligibility is expanded, additional funding would be required. To expand the program to include the 500 students from 2015, \$900,000 annually would be required unless a reduction in current the award amount was made.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, all state public colleges and universities, Department of Veteran's services.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: A language revision would be required in Item 144.F.

11. Other Comments: The provisions of the bill are contingent on funding in the 2016 appropriation act. HB1099 is identical to this bill.